

Royston Town Council meeting – Monday 20th January 2024

Agenda item 8 - North Herts Council Consultation on Proposed Parking Tariff Increases for 2025/26

An email was received from the Strategic Infrastructure & Projects Manager at North Herts Council –

You will recall that we last consulted the Town Council in June 2023 with respect to our proposed tariff increases for 2023/24, which were implemented in November 2023.

Our interim Executive Member for Planning & Transport, Cllr Daniel Allen, has requested that the Community Forums and key organisations (i.e. the Royston Town Council, Knebworth Parish Council, and the Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston BIDs), are informed and invited to offer their comments on the proposed tariff increases in advance of a report being taken to Cabinet in February 2025. These changes are part of the Council's efforts to ensure fair and sustainable parking fees across the district.

Each year, the Council adjusts parking charges to keep up with rising costs, in accordance with its' medium-term financial strategy. Since no increase was applied this year, we're proposing a 4% inflationary rise in April 2025 to account for the last two years (2024/25 and 2025/26).

It was agreed to postpone the increasing of parking tariffs in 2024/25 financial year as the Council wished to bring the tariff increases back in line with the Council's budget setting process for the start of the financial year. The implementation of the parking tariff increases over the last few years were delayed to later in the financial year because of the pandemic and enabling local businesses further time to recover from the pandemic and more recently to address the economic pressures being faced more widely with increases in energy prices and overall cost of living.

Bringing the parking tariff increases back in line will enable the Council to set the parking tariff in line with inflation uplift ready for introduction at the start of the new financial year.

Tariff Proposals for 2025/26

The approach adopted by the Council is to be consistent across all car parks and harmonize tariffs where possible within each town whilst respecting their separate identities.

The aim is to set car parking tariffs that support the achievement of modal shift away from private car use in seeking to reduce carbon emissions and supporting more sustainable initiatives as set out in the Council's Climate Change Strategy (2022-2027) . It is also the Council's intention to introduce alternative methods of payment that will enable visitors to stay longer to help support the vitality of town centres. The replacement of the machines will commence in early 2025.

The Interim Executive Member and the Executive Member for Finance have been involved in discussions and selection of the proposed tariff increases for 2025/26. The following rationale has been applied when considering the proposed tariff increases for next financial year:

- To apply a 4% inflationary increase to all tariffs across all council operated car parks in Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth, Royston and Knebworth rounded up to the nearest 10p with the exception of the free 0-2 hour tariff at the Norton Common car parks in Letchworth to facilitate users of the common and being out of centre car parks. This 4% increase is reflective of general inflation over the 2 year period and is still lower than the inflationary increases on public transport.
- To increase the on-street tariffs in Market Hill Royston to bring the one hour tariff in line with the Royston off street car parks and to apply the 4% inflationary increase to the 2 hour tariff.

- To retain the off-peak (after 3pm) incentive in Hitchin to support the vitality of the town centre, whereby people can choose to stay for 1,2 or 3 hours.
- To introduce a similar off-peak incentive in Letchworth, by proposing a flat rate tariff after 3pm to encourage more visitors to the town centre later in the day and to stay longer. Such an initiative has been requested by Letchworth BID in the past.
- To retain an off-peak incentive in Royston with the introduction of a flat rate tariff after 3pm across all car parks including the on- street tariffs in Market Hill.

Whilst free parking has been provided via a subsidy from Royston First Bid, and previously by Royston Area Committee and from the Hertfordshire County Councillor's budgets since 2012, this subsidy has not had an inflationary increase and is much lower than the lost income/ fair proportion of the car park costs. This has been reviewed to accord with the Council's agreed policy (Sept 2023 Cabinet) to implement subsidy and incentive parking schemes on a break-even approach.

This would not preclude us considering applications from any organisation wishing to subsidise after 3pm parking in any of the Royston car parks.

- The same model has been applied for the off-street incentive across all three towns – where the flat rate after 3pm following the 4% inflationary increase is 10p more than the 1-hour tariff. The proposals are as follows:
 - For Hitchin - increasing the at a flat rate of £1.50 in the long stay car parks and £1.70 in the short stay car parks
 - For Royston – introducing a £1.00 flat rate across all car parks
 - For Letchworth – introducing a flat rate of £1.10 in the Hillshott long stay and the multi-story car park and £1.50 in the Town Hall short stay car park.
- The off-peak incentive is not proposed for Baldock or Knebworth, given the amount of on-street parking and the low tariff structure within the Baldock long stay car park and the short stay car park in Knebworth being a small car park where parking is a premium and the incentive is to encourage turn over of spaces to support the local high street businesses.
- The Council has previously chosen not to increase the cost of Season Tickets or Business Permits since 2021 due the reduction in the take up of these permits with the change in employer habits since the pandemic with more people continuing to work from home and commuting into their office on certain days. This trend appears to be continuing and as a mean of supporting local businesses it is proposed not to increase the cost of season tickets for 2025/26.

These proposals are shown in the Tables at Appendix A (see copy attached) and are also outlined on the Council's website at: [Off street parking tariffs | North Herts Council](#)

Your Views:

We are inviting the town Council, local organisations and the community to share their thoughts and submit their comments before the Council's Cabinet makes a final decision in February 2025. All comments will be summarised in the Officers' report presented to Cabinet.

Comments need to be submitted by **15 January 2025** either to myself or to transport@north-herts.gov.uk.

These proposals were discussed at the Royston Community Forum meeting last night - 4th December.

Appendix A: Proposed Parking Tariff Increases for 2025/26 (Consultation December 2024)

The Proposals include:

- Inflationary uplift of all tariffs in Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock, Knebworth and Royston car parks by 4% rounded up to the nearest 10p, except the free 0-2 hour tariff at Norton Common car parks, to cover the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years;
- Introduce flat rate £1.00 Tariff at Royston Car Parks after 3pm; and
- Introduce a £1.10 or a £1.50 flat rate tariff after 3pm in Letchworth Town Centre Car Parks.

HITCHIN CAR PARKS

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
Bancroft (long stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.30	£1.40
		2	£2.40	£2.50
		3	£3.10	£3.20
		All Day	£5.20	£5.30
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.40	£1.50
		2	£1.40	£1.50
		3	£1.40	£1.50
Biggin Lane (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.50	£1.60
		2	£2.60	£2.70
		3	£4.20	£4.30
		4	£5.70	£5.80
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.60	£1.70
		2	£1.60	£1.70
		3	£1.60	£1.70
Christchurch (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.50	£1.60
		2	£2.60	£2.70
		3	£4.20	£4.30
		4	£5.70	£5.80
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.60	£1.70
		2	£1.60	£1.70
		3	£1.60	£1.70

Lairage MSCP (long stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.30	£1.40
		2	£1.30	£1.40
		3	£2.30	£2.40
		All Day	£4.60	£4.70
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.40	£1.50
		2	£1.40	£1.50
3		£1.40	£1.50	
Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
Portmill East (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.50	£1.60
		2	£2.60	£2.70
		3	£4.20	£4.30
		4	£5.70	£5.80
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.60	£1.70
		2	£1.60	£1.70
3		£1.60	£1.70	
Portmill West (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.50	£1.60
		2	£2.60	£2.70
		3	£4.20	£4.30
		4	£5.70	£5.80
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.60	£1.70
		2	£1.60	£1.70
3		£1.60	£1.70	
St Mary's Square (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.50	£1.60
		2	£2.60	£2.70
		3	£4.20	£4.30
		4	£5.70	£5.80
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.60	£1.70
		2	£1.60	£1.70
3		£1.60	£1.70	
Woodside	Standard	1	£1.30	£1.40

(long stay)	Tariff	2	£2.40	£2.50
		3	£3.10	£3.20
		All Day	£5.20	£5.30
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.40	£1.50
		2	£1.40	£1.50
		3	£1.40	£1.50

LETCHEWORTH CAR PARKS

Car Park		Duration / hour s	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
Hillshott (long stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.90	£1.00
		2	£1.60	£1.70
		3	£2.50	£2.60
		All Day	£5.00	£5.10
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.90	£1.10
		2	£1.60	£1.10
3		£2.50	£1.10	
LMSCP Short Stay	Standard Tariff	1	£0.90	£1.00
		2	£1.60	£1.70
		3	£2.50	£2.60
		4	£4.60	£4.70
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.90	£1.10
		2	£1.60	£1.10
		3	£2.50	£1.10
		4	£4.60	£1.10
LMSCP Long Stay	Standard Tariff	1	£0.90	£1.00
		2	£1.60	£1.70
		3	£2.50	£2.60
		All Day	£5.00	£5.10
	Post 3pm	1	£0.90	£1.10

	Tariff	2	£1.60	£1.10
		3	£2.50	£1.10
Letchworth Town Hall (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£1.30	£1.40
		2	£2.00	£2.10
		3	£3.30	£3.40
		4	£5.00	£5.10
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£1.30	£1.50
		2	£2.00	£1.50
		3	£3.30	£1.50
		4	£5.00	£1.50

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
Norton Common Bowling Club	Standard Tariff	2	£0.00	£0.00
		4	£1.80	£1.90
		Max stay 5	£4.90	£5.00
Norton Common Swimming Pool	Standard Tariff	2	£0.00	£0.00
		4	£1.80	£1.90
		Max stay 5	£4.90	£5.00

BALDOCK CAR PARK

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
The Twitchell (long stay)	Standard Tariff	3	£1.30	£1.40
		All Day	£1.70	£1.80

KNEBWORTH CAR PARK

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
St Martin's Road (short stay except business permit holders)	Standard Tariff	30 Mins	£0.40	£0.50
		1	£0.70	£0.80
		2	£1.50	£1.60
		3	£2.10	£2.20
		Max Stay 4	£4.30	£4.40

ROYSTON CAR PARKS

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
Angel Pavement (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.80	£0.90
		2	£1.60	£1.70
		3	£3.90	£4.00
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.00	£1.00
		2	£0.00	£1.00
		3	£0.00	£1.00
Civic Centre (long stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.80	£0.90
		2	£0.90	£1.00
		3	£1.20	£1.30
		All Day	£3.50	£3.60
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.00	£1.00
		2	£0.00	£1.00
		3	£0.00	£1.00
Market Place (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.80	£0.90
		2	£1.60	£1.70
		3	£3.90	£4.00

	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.00	£1.00
		2	£0.00	£1.00
		3	£0.00	£1.00
Princes Mews (operates mostly as a short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.80	£0.90
		2	£1.60	£1.70
		3	£5.00	£5.10
		All Day	£7.70	£7.80
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.00	£1.00
		2	£0.00	£1.00
		3	£0.00	£1.00
Priory Gardens (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.80	£0.90
		2	£1.60	£1.70
		3	£3.90	£4.00
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.00	£1.00
		2	£0.00	£1.00
		3	£0.00	£1.00

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
The Warren (long stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.80	£0.90
		2	£1.40	£1.50
		3	£1.90	£2.00
		All Day	£4.00	£4.10
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.00	£1.00
		2	£0.00	£1.00
		3	£0.00	£1.00

ROYSTON ON-STREET PARKING CHARGES

Car Park		Duration / hours	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
Market Hill (short stay)	Standard Tariff	1	£0.50	£0.90
		2	£1.00	£1.10
	Post 3pm Tariff	1	£0.00	£1.00
		2	£0.00	£1.00
		3	£0.00	£1.00

Agenda item 9: Proposed NHDC Off Street Parking Place Traffic Regulation Order Consultation

The following email was received from North Herts Council -

Dear Stakeholder,

I am writing to inform you as a key Stakeholder of the Council's proposal to make the following Off- Street Traffic Regulation Orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

- **The North Hertfordshire District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Hitchin, Letchworth, Royston) Order 2024**
- **The North Hertfordshire District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Knebworth) Order 2024**
- **The North Hertfordshire District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Baldock) No. 3 Order 2024**

The proposal is to revoke the current:

- The North Hertfordshire District Council (Off –Street Parking Places) Order 2014,
- The North Hertfordshire District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Knebworth) Order 2011,
- The North Hertfordshire District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Knebworth) (Amendment) Order 2012, and
- The North Hertfordshire District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Baldock) No. 2 Order 2014

and replace these with new Orders which introduces alternative methods of payment, virtual permits and season tickets, and reviews the definitions and length of stay for electric vehicle parking bays within the Council's operated car parks as listed in Schedule 1 and 2 of these Orders in Baldock, Hitchin, Knebworth, Letchworth and Royston.

These proposals also include updating Schedule 1 for Biggin Lane Car Park in Hitchin in the North Hertfordshire District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Hitchin, Letchworth, Royston) Order 2024 to enable the public to park in the car park on Market Days after 8:30am.

Full details of these proposals, copies of the draft Orders and statement of reasons can be found on the Council's website under the Off-Street Order Section at: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/parking-orders-and-reviews>.

Site notices will also be displayed in each of the council car parks and a Public Notice will be published in the local newspapers on 2nd January 2025 informing the general public about these proposals.

As this email initiates the formal consultation part of the Traffic Regulation Order process if you have any comments, observations or support regarding the proposals set out in the above Orders, please submit these, ideally by email or in writing by **5pm on Friday 24th January 2025** quoting reference *NHDC/OFFST/2024* to:

Mark Hindmarch, Technical Project Officer (Infrastructure)

Email: mark.hindmarch@north-herts.gov.uk

Your comments will be considered by NHC officers in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport, in advance of proceeding to the next stage which would be to consider making the above draft Off-Street Orders.

Royston Town Council

Biodiversity Policy

Adopted by Full Council 15th January 2024 - Minute number: 278/24

Review date: January 2025

Introduction:

In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Royston Town Council will in exercising all its functions have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

Definition:

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet.

Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. It is the building block of our 'ecosystems'. These provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

Aims and Objectives:

The object of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity of Royston.

All committees of Royston Town Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, Royston Town Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support local businesses & council operations where possible in the adoption of low impact practices.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

Actions:

Planning applications

- The council, when commenting on planning applications, will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- It will support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.

- It will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain and seek to go over and above 10% where possible.

Land and property management

- The council will carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- The council will consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work.
- Special care will be taken to ensure that the work carried out on open spaces, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- The council will consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

Local community

- The council will raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- The council will engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- It will, where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower planting.

Partners

- Royston Town Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of the town.

In addition, an action plan will be drawn and progress against its objectives will be reported at the Annual Town Meeting and in the Annual Report.

NATURE ACTION PLAN

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Website Newsletter Social Media
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	
Green Walk and Stile Plantations	Take expert advice on the management of the sites.	Sustain & enhance natural habitats.	Ongoing	Website Newsletter Social Media
	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.	Protecting habitats		
	Work with volunteers, contractors and other agencies to enhance the areas.	Protecting/enhancing habitats		
	Plant more diverse hedging and wildflowers where possible.	Enhance habitats		
	Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after.	Regular attention.		
	To have regular bat surveys.	Sustain & protect habitat.		
	Cutting back, bird box and path maintenance to take place outside of bird nesting season.	Protect habitat.		
Green Street Allotments	Encourage allotment holders to continue to embrace biodiversity and recognise their contribution.	Protecting/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	Website Newsletter
	Encourage the use of organic treatments rather than chemicals and pesticides.	Protecting wildlife.		
	Hedge cutting to take place outside of bird nesting season.	Protecting wildlife.		
The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Local Plan.	Protecting/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	Website
	Provision of land for allotment space should be considered on all suitable larger applications to assist RTC in its statutory duty to provide these and further biodiversity.	Enhancing habitats	Ongoing	
		Extending habitats	Ongoing	

	Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries.			
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	<p>Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish.</p> <p>Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with ideas for actions highlighted on the website e.g. installing Swift boxes.</p> <p>Maintain a page on the town council website updating actions taken, ongoing projects, photographs, and useful links.</p>	<p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p>	Ongoing	Website Newsletter
Support Community Projects	<p>Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.</p> <p>Work in partnership with schools to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them.</p> <p>Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.</p>	<p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p>		Website Newsletter